

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed November 10, 2003. Claims 1-22 were pending in the Application. Claims 1-8 and 15-22 stand allowed, and Claims 9-14 stand rejected. Applicant amends Claim 9 and cancels Claim 12 to place all claims in condition for allowance in accordance with the Examiner's indications. Applicant also amends Claim 15 to correct a typographical error. Applicant notes that the amendment to Claim 15 does not narrow the scope of Claim 15 and is not made for reasons related to patentability. Reconsideration and favorable action is requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant acknowledges and thanks the Examiner for the allowance of Claims 1-8 and 15-22. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-8 and 15-22 remain in condition for allowance.

The Examiner rejects Claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, but indicates that Claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under § 112 and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the timely and favorable consideration of this claim.

To place this Application in condition for allowance in accordance with the Examiner's indications, Applicant amends independent Claim 9 in two ways. First, Applicant amends Claim 9 to replace "an industry standard connector" with "a connector." Applicant respectfully submits that this amendment obviates the Examiner's rejection under §112. Second, Applicant amends independent Claim 9 to include all the elements of Claim 12, which Applicant now cancels. Accordingly, independent Claims 9 now reflects originally submitted elements that the Examiner has indicated to be allowable, and the remaining claims all depend from allowable independent claims. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of all pending claims.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 9, 10, 11, and 14

The Examiner rejects Claims 9, 10, 11, and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,267,606 issued to Poplawski ("*Poplawski*") in view of

U.S. Patent No. 5,032,898 issued to Bowen, et al. ("*Bowen*"), or U.S. Patent No. 4,199,222 issued to Ikushima ("*Ikushima*"), or U.S. Patent No. 5,985,185 issued to Stijer, et al. ("*Stijer*"). Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of these claims based on *Poplawski* in view of *Bowen*, *Ikushima*, or *Stijer* is obviated for the reasons discussed above and thus requests withdrawal of this rejection. Although Applicant believes these claims without amendment are allowable over *Poplawski* in view of *Bowen*, *Ikushima*, or *Stijer*, Applicant amends Claim 9 to expedite issuance of this Application. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute the original claims without amendment in future applications.

Claim 13

The Examiner rejects Claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Poplawski* in view of *Bowen*, or *Ikushima*, or *Stijer*, as applied to Claim 9 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,155,784 issued to Knott ("*Knott*"). However, Claim 13 depends from Claim 9, which is now in condition for allowance in accordance with the Examiner's indications. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of Claim 13.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §112

The Examiner rejects Claims 9-14 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. As noted above, Applicant amends Claim 9 to replace "an industry standard connector" with "a connector." Applicant respectfully submits that the §112 rejection of Claims 9-14 is obviated due to this amendment.

CONCLUSION

Applicant has made an earnest attempt to place the Application in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicant respectfully requests full allowance of all pending claims. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference or an interview would advance prosecution of the Application in any manner, the undersigned attorney for Applicant stands ready to conduct such a conference at the convenience of the Examiner.

Although no fees are believed to be currently due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

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